DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 043 818 AC 008 398

AUTHOR Smith, L. L., Ed.; Reagen, Michael V., Ed.
TITLE Management Development for Urban Administration.
INSTITUTION Syracuse Univ., N.Y. Continuing Education Center for the Public Service.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.45
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Organization, Adult Education, City Officials, Communication Skills, Decision Making, *Management Development, Planning, *Public Administration Education, Public Relations, Supervision, *Urban Areas

ABSTRACT

Readings summarize presentations made at seminars conducted by the Continuing Education Center for the Public Service at Syracuse University. They cover: personal communication skills, kinds of information needed by a public official, and information retrieval system; how to persuade, sell, listen, argue in everyday public relations; organization and supervision, staffing, decision making and planning; and application of new management techniques to local government; and the future of urban areas. (PT)

NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF MAYORS AND OTHER MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

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ED 043818

Management Development For Urban Administration

1970

CONDUCTED BY:

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE

AC008397

ED043818

Readings for

Management Development For Urban Administration

Edited by

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and
Michael V. Reagen

The Continuing Education Center for the Public Service
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York

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PREFACE

Your Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials exists to promote efficient government in the State of New York. As such, we consider one of our primary responsibilities to be the provision of ample opportunities for local officials to enhance the special skills they must possess in order to deal with the increasingly complex problems thrust upon them.

In furtherance of that responsibility your Conference, with the support of grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the State of New York, offered a series of five one-and-one-half-day seminars dealing with various aspects of "Management Development for Urban Administration". The sessions were designed and conducted by the Continuing Education Center for the Public Service, University College, Syracuse University.

Those who supported this undertaking with their attendance at one or more of the seminars have benefited most. For those unable to attend, the information presented in this compilation will provide a summary of the various presentations made.

We hope these contents will be of use to you.

Raymond J. Cothran
Executive Director
Conference of Mayors

INTRODUCTION

"Management Development for Urban Administration"

This is the second workbook of readings prepared for programs operated by the Continuing Education Center for the Public Service in behalf of the New York State Conference of Mayors. The Center is grateful to Mr. Raymond Cothran of the Conference of Mayors for making possible the publication of these workbooks. The first was entitled "Training in Community Development" and emphasized specific local problem-areas such as Housing and Urban Development, Social Welfare Problems and Intergovernmental Relations. The present volume deals with managerial skills necessary to cope effectively with the kinds of complex problems confronting local public authorities. Hopefully, local officials in communities throughout New York State will find these articles to be of practical value as they face their urgent and difficult challenges.

Although not all lecturers in the five workshops comprising this program, contributed articles for the workbook, most of the major ideas discussed in the program are covered herein. The Continuing Education Center appreciates greatly the time and effort given to this project by the busy authors represented in this publication. Mr. Michael V. Reagen, Program Administrator at the Continuing Education Center, arranged and edited this workbook of readings.

Lee Smith
Executive Director
Continuing Education Center
for the Public Service

PERSONAL COMMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DOES A PUBLIC OFFICIAL NEED TO KNOW?

by

Jack Murray

Assistant Research Director
Division of Research and Development
Onondaga County

The problems facing public officials today are enormous and so complex that at times it seems impossible for an official to keep abreast of them. In the larger units of government, research, planning and development staffs have been created to aid the official in not only making decisions on current problems but in alerting him of future problems. Citizens' Committees of interested citizens can be used effectively by public officials for obtaining information and recommendations as to the solving of problems. Various governmental and private units set up to aid officials are also a very valuable sources of information.

The smaller units of government are naturally limited both physically and fiscally in their ability to have the resources in their structure that larger units have. The aforementioned alternative as to gaining advice therefore must be used. In many cases, smaller units of government have joined together on a regional basis and by pooling their resources can avail themselves to professional advice—this procedure is being followed more and more in the field of planning.

However, the overall problem of information is one that needs a complete overhauling to meet the current needs. For example, Onondaga County government has grown from 2,100 employees in 1962 to 3,800 employees in 1970. The County budget has increased from 90 pages in 1962 to 462 pages in 1970. The County budget has risen fiscally from $34 million in 1962 to $104 million in 1970. The welfare budget increased from $13.6 million in 1962 to $51 million in 1970. Along with this growth in County government, the population in Onondaga County has increased from 423 thousand in 1960 to an estimated 480 thousand currently. Because of these current factors both in government and in overall population, it is vitally necessary that more emphasis be given in creating departments not only to provide the public official with information but to keep the populous informed as to the services government is providing them. Industry, many years ago, realized the importance of the creation of such departments. However, government has been reluctant to create such structures because of their seemingly intangible results. By that I mean that the tax dollars are not seen at work as they are in the development of highways, buildings and sewage treatment plants. The minority, in many cases, also makes claim that "informational money" is used for propaganda to help keep the majority in power. This thinking has to change, because as I pointed out earlier, public officials must be provided with the knowledge necessary to make decisions in our current complex society, and as I have just stated, the information on why such decisions were made has to be related to the public to justify the use of the tax dollars expended. By creating such departments, we will have succeeded in this two-fold purpose.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM?

by

Gerald N. Hoffman

Manager of Communications, Syracuse Tank & Mfg. Co., Inc.
and
Administrative Assistant to State Senator Tarky Lombardi, Jr.

Some administrators looking for necessary and relevant information might bypass a very important source: their own office. Are you fully aware of the resources at your disposal? When was the last time you got an updated list of reference books and research material, etc., on hand in your office?

Such a list should be maintained and updated continuously.

Having exhausted the resources of your own office, don't overlook the various agencies within your village, town, city and county governments.

There are many groups, some within your own community, which might be resource possibilities. These include the Association of Mayors, the County Officers Association, the Association of Towns, the Manufacturers Association, the Chamber of Commerce, labor organizations, the local chapters of the Medical and Dental Societies, the Bar Association, civil rights organizations, religious groups, schools and colleges as well as countless professional bodies.

Public officials and governmental agencies at the state and federal governmental levels might also have the answers for you. Do you know your state legislators, United States Senators and Congressmen? Do you know their key staff members? Do you know where and how to contact them?

Do you have good contacts within state and federal government agencies?

You should be aware of several reference books for state and federal government which list the names of top personnel by department.

Among the useful books on New York State are:

LEGISLATIVE MANUAL, an annual publication containing the New York State Constitution, the Charters of Freedom, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and other sections on the United States Government and New York State's administrative departments, etc.

NEW YORK LEGISLATIVE RECORD AND INDEX, a weekly publication during the annual session of the Legislature which lists legislative action to date.

THE NEW YORK RED BOOK, an illustrated yearbook of authentic information concerning New York State, its departments, and political subdivisions and the officials who administer its affairs.

On the Federal Governmental level, two books are particularly helpful:

CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTORY, federal counterpart to the New York Red Book and Legislative Manual.

THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, daily record of all activities of Congress, including speeches.

In going to outside sources, you should remember that your information retrieval system has a human element which must be handled with care. Patience, courtesy and understanding might all be virtues, but they also can pay off for you by opening important doors.

GETTING THE MESSAGE

by

Ron Burke

Instructor, School of Speech & Dramatic Art
Syracuse University

A skill that most of us need to learn all over again is listening. For centuries man has been stressing the speaker or the communicator and the thinking behind what he says. During the last 25 years or so, we have developed a greater awareness and a greater understanding of the entire communication process; that is to say, we think more and more of the speaker, the message, the listener reception and importantly the listener reaction. We are not only concerned with the sending of the message, but much attention is now directed to how they are received. Great focus is now placed on the listener.

Listening is one of our most important avenues of learning. A large amount of our knowledge comes to us through our ears. As far back as most of us can remember our earliest experiences were a result of exposure to sound. How we learn is dependent upon our ability to hear and select properly. Speaking and listening, we find, most certainly do complement each other. Unfortunately, and to the frustration of many of us, we forget the importance of listening. Rarely do we invest much time in the importance of listening. Rarely do we invest much time in improving our listening skills.

To be more specific, the intake and distribution of a message—listening—can be described in five steps. Hearing: sound waves are received by the ear and at once arouse sensations of sound in the brain. Attention: we attempt to filter out all distractions and concentrate on the sounds presented to our ear as the hearing continues. Understanding: the specific meanings attached to those certain sounds are recalled and perceived in their pattern—provided however, that these sounds are in a familiar language. Translation: we attempt to interpret the "real" meaning of the sounds or message along with its many subtleties and implications. Lastly, there is the Response: a reaction is given to the message, such as smiling, frowning, nodding or shaking the head, applauding, setting the jaw or leaning forward.

Good listening, I have suggested, is not merely a passive "soaking up" of the speaker's words or message. Moreover, it is an active effort to derive some meaning from the communication situation—from the message sender's tone of voice, movements, gestures, and facial expression, as well as from the words he utters. In addition, it includes interpretation and appraisal: a constant and critical consideration of the ideas presented, the materials by which these ideas are supported and explained, the purposes which motivate them, and the language in which they are expressed. In short, good listening is comprehensive.

How, then, can you learn to listen more perceptively and thus improve the accuracy and usefulness of the communication process? One of the initial steps to take is to begin to understand the barriers to listening. For instance, passivity in listening is where a poor listener does not exert himself to listen but expects the speaker to do all the work involved in the communication process. This inertness may be due to fatigue, laziness, indifference to the subject, dislike of being required to listen, or the ha-

bitual tendency to believe everything that is spoken. True belief is the result of active participation of the mind through comparison, estimation and choice. The passive listener is guilty of not engaging in strenuous and challenging mental activity. Another barrier to poor listening is the overconcern with nonessentials or trivia. If the listener occupies his mind with distractions good listening is near impossible. Some supposed listeners forget the person to whom they are listening because of their personal habit of "wool gathering" or daydreaming. If the message sender refers to something that the auditor would rather think about instead of what is being said, then the listener goes off on a mental tangent. The individual must learn to concentrate and not get caught up in extraneous happenings such as outside noises, other people in the room, or simply going off into a mental tangent.

One of the most important persons in the world to most of us is ourself. This self-preoccupation can be dangerous if as a listener we cannot concentrate on the speaker's ideas. We must learn that self-indulgence at a crucial time of communication can most certainly create dissonance or a communication garble. Moreover, a resistance on the part of some individuals to habitually disagree with whatever anyone says can be disastrous. This aggressive attitude is usually a defense against inner vulnerability. No matter whether the speaker makes a statement for an idea or against it, this declaration immediately sets the listener off on his own pattern of arguments. He at once begins to be subjective.

Moral Inflexibility. Certain individuals are incapable of listening to anything that contradicts what they firmly believe. These people have decided categorically what is ethical, right, and true, and they also refuse to interpret messages other than the way in which they wish to perceive them.

In conclusion then, listening can be cultivated like all other communicative skills. Good listening is not necessarily a matter of intelligence, for some highly gifted persons are not able to listen very well at all, while other persons of the average type of intelligence have been fortunate and wise enough to perfect the habit of excellent listening. Efficient listening is learned by those who have the drive and determination to practice it every time they get an opportunity until they master it. Directed practice in listening broadens a person's knowledge, enlarges his sympathies, and improves his language facility. We can learn something from anyone we listen to. The therapeutic value of listening is well known in the confessional and in psychotherapy. It is also of importance in everyday relations.

THE "ACID-TEST" OF COMMUNICATION

by

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The Maxwell International Development Seminar
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In the past, popular lectures to government officials on communications stressed tricks: "how to" persuade, sell, listen and argue. Today, the popular lectures focus on reasons: "why" people understand, follow, talk and agree.

The new emphasis is necessary. Education is a "buyer's market." Students demand what they need. Public officials solve problems in climates of severe constraints and limited resources. Their immediate interest was with tools. Now, it is with causes.

Today, tricks increasingly don't work as efficiently and effectively as they previously did. "Things," as the kids say, "are different." People are more aware because they are more exposed. Our mass media, our schools, our advancing technologies have, indeed, "remade the scene."

Most government administrators know "the good old days" are forever gone. Most officials realize that, if conditions are to improve, they cannot continue to do what they have done.

Communication scientists, moreover, are warning public officials that future attempts to manipulate individuals and groups will increasingly backfire against them because people will recognize and resent they are being tricked. In the future, in order to govern, or manage, or organize, or lead people, officials will truly have to understand and be understood by their constituencies.

The current emphasis on dialogue—"communicating with people"—is in sharp contrast to the past emphasis on rhetoric—"communicating at people." Dialogue rests on reason. Rhetoric rests on tricks. Understanding only rests from reasoning with people. It never results from tricking people.

Dialogue, of course, assumes risk. It also takes effort, time and trust. The government official who truly wants to be understood and to understand his constituency has to risk the loss of his majesty. He has to trust his constituency to spend the time to make the effort to show he is human.

Most men give lip service to the premise that communication is a "two-way street." Few of us, however, try to achieve a reciprocity of understanding. In fact, in giving chief concern to ourselves as senders of messages, we concentrate more on the means of transmission than on the back-and-forth exchange of information, feelings and opinions.

Being thus self-centered, we communicate within the framework of our own needs and interests instead of considering the interests and needs of those with whom we are in communication. Usually, when we involve ourselves in communication, we become authorities. We assume we are expected to propound our "gems of wisdom." We don't ask questions; we give answers. We don't solicit opinions; we express our feelings.

When others' views coincide with ours, we respect their judgment and fairness. Should a conflict develop, we become critical of them, not of ourselves. We deal with others. Our firm convictions, based on our ideals, appear quite logical. The narrow viewpoints of others are prejudices which cloud issues.

Since expressing ourselves, verbally and nonverbally, is a common, everyday experience, we get the feeling communication comes naturally. Accepting advice or guidance is an admission of weakness which our pride forces us to ignore rather than correct.

People always respond to us, sometimes with words, sometimes with gestures, sometimes with silence. But we do not always pay attention to the way they react to us. Often we let the level of authority, our authority, influence not only the method but also the content of our messages. The status of two people is usually not equal and this affects the message. How conducive to a free exchange of ideas and feelings is the relationship between father and son, Mayor and citizen, Chief and patrolman?

Most profoundly, we fail to recognize that even a common language does not automatically beget common understanding. The words, gestures and expressions we use do not have meaning in themselves. Only people have

meaning. The words and expressions we use may not have the same meaning to the other fellow as they do to us.

To engage in dialogue takes a lot of pain and patience. There is, unfortunately, no "sure-fire" formula for simplifying dialogue. There are no gimmicks to cut time or effort. There is only one "payoff": genuine communication. There is only one "acid test": true understanding.

Suggested Readings:

S. G. Huneryger and I. L. Heckmann. Human Relations In Management (Chicago: South Western Publishing Company), 1967.

Floyd W. Matson and Ashley Montagu. The Human Dialogue: Perspectives on Communication (New York: The Free Press), 1967.

Henry Clay Smith. Sensitivity to People (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company), 1966.

Don Fabun. Communications: The Transfer of Meaning (Beverly Hills: The Glencoe Press), 1968.

Robert T. Golembiewski and Arthur Blumberg. Sensitivity Training and the Laboratory Approach (Tasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.). 1970.

PRACTICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

PUTTING YOUR MESSAGE THROUGH THE MEDIA

by

Dr. Edmund C. Arnold

Newhouse Communications Center
Syracuse University

Public officials are newsmen and advertising men simultaneously. When they report to their constituents, they must use all the techniques of a reporter. When they exercise their obligations of community leadership, they are, in effect, advertising.

In either case, they must communicate.

Basically they must convey the "5-W's": who, what, where, when and why (or how). These five must be accurate; they must be honest (and remember that you can be 100% accurate and about 115% dishonest if you adhere only to the nothing-but-the-truth formula); they must be terse; they should be interesting.

In advertising we often refer to the "AIDA formula". This reminds us that advertising—which is merely "persuasive communication"—must first of all:

A. Capture attention of the prospect;
I. Focus his attention on your topic;
D. Crystallize desire (or show a need);
A. Motivate to action.

As in any art or craft, a key ingredient in good communication is simplicity. A good writer wields a blue pencil (to delete unnecessary words) as vigorously as he hits the typewriter in the first place. Good painters or sculptors strip their work to only essential elements. Rodin, the French sculptor who did "The Thinker" among other masterpieces, once said that

to create a great statue, "All you do is take a piece of rock and cut away everything you don't need." That is still an operative formula. In news releases, speeches, reports, brochures—whatever—cut away everything you don't need.

To have communications you need a sender (a speaker, writer, photographer, etc.); a receiver (the reader, listener, viewer); the message and a "system" in which these operate. Your system is generally the mass media. Anything else in the system is considered "noise", or as we would be more apt to say, "static". Any static, even the softest melodic hum, makes it harder to hear the message. We must eliminate the noise in our own communications.

If the receiver doesn't receive the message, it's not a communication. It's like—and as wasteful as—an incomplete forward pass on the football field. In your case, though, the receiver, the public, doesn't have the obligation to catch the message as the football end has to catch the ball.

So you must involve the reader. Think of your message as a personal letter or phone call to one individual. (I like to visualize some friends in my old home town. If my message won't convince Joh, or if it won't be clear to Susan, or if it won't interest their teenage son and daughter, I know I have to rewrite it.)

The most important word in the world is "I". So we use it—as "you", of course—to involve the reader. Instead of telling about budget figures that run into millions, reduce it to "This is what it will cost you personally—but here are the benefits you will gain thereby."

Efficiency in any human activity depends on the skill with which we communicate. This is especially true of public officials.

Communications skills require study and training and practice. Every great communicator, past or present, practiced his skills as assiduously as the great athlete practices his. I suggest that everyone in this room—and that certainly includes me—should work hard at perfecting our own skills as reporters and advertisers.

THE PUBLIC OFFICIAL AND THE NEWSMAN

by

Art Peterson

News Director, WFBL Radio (ABC)
Syracuse, New York

If an official is to work with newsmen, it is to his advantage to better understand the purpose and function of the newsman.

In the area of government operations and/or people, the newsman serves as a liaison between the government and the electorate. Unlike the ordinary liaison, the newsman is not a passive being. Rather, he acts as an advocate for the people. He does this in his role of serving as an extension of the electorate. Because of the many factors involved—district or city size, geographic location of the constituent, and working hours—it's often impossible for the electroate to personally question their public officials. They must rely on the newsman to act in their behalf. This does have an advantage for the public official who is then able to spend more time pur-

suing the duties of his office. Because the newsman represents all, his questions must reflect their thoughts, many political persuasions, varying ideas, and different self interests. His responsibility is to them, the people.

Serving as the eyes and ears of the electorate, it is the duty of the newsman to learn as much as possible of the functions of government. Every act of government, large or small, affects the present and future being of the constituent, including the unborn. Because public officials are, in reality, servants of the people, acting as their representatives, the people are entitled to know of all acts of government. The newsman, too, is a servant of the people and it is incumbent on him to relay all facts and information necessary to allow the general public to attempt to reach intelligent, although not always concurring, decisions.

The news media can be used, quite successfully, as a working arm of government. There is no quicker, nor easier, nor cheaper way of reaching the masses than through the news media.

Often times, mistakes in government decisions can be avoided by sending up a trial balloon through the newsman. Public reaction can be gauged and weighed before an actual commitment is made. (This is usually accomplished via the news-leak.... "informed sources report").

Every human being has a certain amount of bias or prejudice working within. The newsman is no exception but in most cases, he is consciously aware of his need to relate the news objectively and again, in most cases, will do this to the best of his ability. The majority of newsrooms will distinguish the subjective from the objective report. The subjective being titled as an opinion, editorial, or feature story or column. Favorably or unfavorably, this is an extra fringe benefit of public office.

The newsman, it is quickly learned, has an insatiable appetite for news. The best of news stories is impatiently devoured and the newsman is hungry for more. This is his nature; this is his responsibility. He is curious and ever probing.

Public officials should learn to evaluate news that is occurring within their department. Sometimes the most routine of occurrences can be of great news value. The key is in the ability to point out its distinguishing or unique feature. In learning to properly evaluate news, the public official can avoid the pitfalls of confusing bonafine information with propaganda. The two can go hand in hand but propaganda for the cimple purpose of advancing a cause or self interest is quickly recognized by the professional newsman. The short-lived advantages of such efforts are much outweighed by the disadvantages since the official will have to continue working with the news media. The newsman, like an elephant, never forgets. (It's part of his job.)

Learning to work with newsmen is of vital importance to the government official and can be an immeasurable asset to his administration and his career.

PUBLIC OPINION

by

Dr. M. S. Sorcher

Research Department, General Electric Co.

We are going to discuss several aspects of public opinion—how to interpret it, the nature of polling and reliability of polling, how to take a survey, and propaganda. There are many assumptions made by many people about these areas—many of these assumptions, however, are unwarranted. There is a great deal of folklore, fads, and fiction with respect to the measurement and interpretation of public opinion as well as the dissemination of propaganda.

Everyone is an expert on public opinion. We all know how we feel about things and what should be done and what should not be done about important issues. However, there are many things about the way in which people form opinions, which the individual himself does not clearly understand. Although we like to think of ourselves as being clear, independent thinkers, in that we arrive at our opinions only after carefully examining the facts, we tend to forget that our opinions have been shaped by early childhood experiences as well as by the very powerful social influences from groups to which we belong.

One of the things to keep in mind before we go further is that while most behavior is attitudinally determined to some degree, nevertheless all attitudes are not directly translated into behavior. In other words, public opinion cannot always be trusted to result in public action. While people who are interested in public opinion are not just interested in what people believe but very interested in how to influence or change these beliefs, there are a lot of assumptions about the nature of propaganda which are unwarranted. As you know, the methods used to influence opinion in the direction suggested by a source are generally subsumed under the field which we call propaganda. Necessarily, therefore, an interest in public opinion spills over into an interest in propaganda—and to disassociate these two areas of knowledge is unrealistic. But what is propaganda—can it be defined? Simply, propaganda is persuasive communication—it comes in every form and it may be intended to be beneficial (e.g., health communications) or harmful (hate literature), true or false.

With regard to opinion polls, many polls are poorly conceived and poorly carried out, but the reader of polling data doesn't know the difference—he generally just looks at the numbers. Too many things can go wrong between sampling planned design and actual conduct of a poll survey. There is also the problem of survey construction. It is much too easy to mean one thing in a question and have this misinterpreted—or get an answer which is viewed by the respondent as more socially acceptable in his real opinion. We also come to the problem of interpretation. The results of opinion data are placed in the hands of the customer who orders it, but many customers for this data lack the sophistication necessary to understand what it means.

So there is a great deal to opinion measurement—and one should be somewhat suspicious of the reports of any survey unless you know something about the questions that were asked, who carried out the survey, and who designed the survey.

DO YOU FLY BY THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTS?

by

Gerald N. Hoffman

Manager of Communications, Syracuse Tank Co., Inc.
Administrative Assistant to State Senator Tarky Lombardi, Jr.

The administrator who flies by the seat of his pants by making hasty decisions without weighing their impact on the persons affected, to put it bluntly, is often caught with his pants down.

In the local setting, few administrators are afforded the luxury of having scientifically sophisticated polls to guide them in making major decisions. This is not to say, however, that one cannot make use of scientific techniques or gain helpful and necessary insight from the results of psychological experiments on attitudes.

At first, the administrator might well seek to define the groups, or publics, who will be affected by his decision. As his inventory progresses, he might find that there are several, distinctly separate publics who may hold totally dissimilar attitudes on the subject in question.

Staff meetings, public hearings, informal mail polls and questionnaires, and conferences with key opinion leaders within the groups affected, are a few of the approaches open to the administrator.

If he is fortunate, he will learn that the prevailing climate of opinion is right for his decision. In most cases, he may find that there will be resistance and opposition in certain quarters.

He might be dealing with deeply seated attitudes which scientific data stipulates are very difficult to change. On the other hand, the attitudes might not be as deeply held and might be changed by the public support of "opinion leaders", persons held in high regard by the groups involved.

It might be wise to issue a word of warning on polls and questionnaires. The administrator must not let persons being polled believe that he will be bound by the results of the poll which would naturally limit his freedom of action.

Even when the administrator knows that the action he will take will be unpopular, research again shows that advance warning can lessen the impact of the ultimate decision. Many veteran politicians make valuable use of the device known as the trial balloon to sound out public opinion on new ideas.

Do not overlook the role of the news media, which in many localities is the most important molder of public opinion. It might be best to first discuss major decisions with your newspaper editor or publisher. His support or opposition can mean a lot to you.

The thoughtful decision-maker will have around him or will seek out those who have or will express opinions differing from his own. The administrator surrounded by yes men is headed for trouble because he and his staff have deluded themselves into believing that everyone thinks the way that they do.

To avoid the dangers of the yes men, the administrator must create an atmosphere in which his subordinates and those from whom he asks an opinion, are free to express themselves or the thoughts of others even though the comments might be of a highly critical nature.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend to those who would wish to explore this subject further, the volume, "Public Opinion and Propaganda," edited by Daniel Katz, Dorwin Cartwright, Samuel Eldersveld and Alfred McClung Lee. The volume is published by Holt-Rinehart and Winston.

ORGANIZATION AND SUPERVISION

STAFFING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

by Karl M. Schmidt, Ph.D
The Maxwell School, Syracuse University

Despite the wide variations in the offices occupied by local chief executives—from New York City with its seven million inhabitants down to Sherrill with its three thousand--there are many similarities in the nature of the problems they face. While the availability of staff will similarly vary from significant to nearly nonexistent, an analysis of the executive tasks involved and the possibilities of staff assistance suggests that the difference is one of degree and not of kind.

Two trends stand out in any analysis of the modern local chief executive —the increasing complexity of the task (local governments are taking on additional responsibilities, not losing them) and the increasing need for a strong executive to deal with complexity (the strong mayor movement exemplifies one effort to meet this need.)

A local chief executive must be many things—chief executive, chief administrator, legislative leader, political leader, ombudsman, ceremonial head and principal lobbyist, (to cite only some of the more important.)

As chief executive he must be policy planner—looking ahead to future needs and offering suggestions to meet them. He must provide the leadership in identifying and examining policy alternatives. And, in the end, he must make the decisions—not only on policy but also on priorities.

As chief administrator, he must recognize that unexecuted decisions, no matter how wise and foresighted, are no more than unfulfilled wishes. Consequently he must supervise the execution of policy, holding to account those charged with the immediate responsibilities, coordinating their activities, adjudicating their disputes. In addition to policy administration he must also take a personal hand, if the community is small, in supervising that all-important supportive trio of fiscal management, personnel administration and contracting purchasing.

As legislative leader, the local chief executive must recognize both the institutional incapacity of city councils and town boards to initiate important public policy, as well as their high sensitivity to their own infirmity. Consequently he must lead without seeming to lead, providing an opportunity for review and amendment that will satisfy the legislative ego.

As political leader, whether he or some boss is actually head of his party, he must accept constant exposure on the firing line—the visible symbol for public praise and public wrath. In the absence of a behind the scenes boss, or bosses, he must provide the organizational know-how to knit together the generally disorganized and frequently quarreling factions that make up the modern local party "machine". Finally, of course, he must accept the major burden of recurrent campaigning—not only for his own office but for all other posts, no matter how minor, in which his party has a stake.

As ombudsman, since few American communities provide any formal counterpart of this Scandinavian post, he must be the ever-willing recipient of public complaints. He must initiate or conduct the necessary inquiries

into possible dereliction of duty by subordinates, air community grievances and, wherever possible, resolve difficulties with the least possible friction (and quite possibly the least public acclaim).

As ceremonial head, he must preside over interminable supermarket openings, ingest uncounted church suppers and hail properly all the special weeks and days that community groups expect. Additionally he must, at least in theory, be prepared for all kinds of emergency operations from civil defense through floods and natural disasters to city hall marriages.

Finally, as principal lobbyist for his community, he must represent its interests with innumerable federal agencies, with frequently hostile state legislatures, and with sister communities not always inclined to friendly cooperation.

This brief listing suggests the obvious impossibility of any one human's adequately fulfilling each and every one of the tasks. To do so he would have at least three disparate abilities—the political capacity to attract a majority of the voters, the administrative capacity to be an efficient manager, and the leadership capacity, whether charismatic or situational or both, to bring out the best in his city, his party and his people.

Since such three-headed capacities are seldom combined in one mortal, the question then arises as to what the local executive can do about it. For instance, can improved staffing help provide an answer?

Some of the described functions are less easily assigned to staff, less easily assumed even by capable subordinates. The ombudsman function is one of these. Despite Scandinavian success in assigning complaint-investigation tasks to a separately chosen official, the American voting public has come to expect a degree of personal attention to individual problems that bodes ill for the chief executive who seeks to evade or delegate such duties. The next election is likely to be the end of the political road for the mayor whose secretarial staff becomes too efficient in screening him from the never-ending phone calls and complaints. Similarly his ceremonial duties may be burdensome and time-consuming but they are difficult to delegate to anyone else. Moreover, they produce that regular flow of newspaper articles and photographs so necessary to keep his name and face before the public in the intervals between elections. Finally, with politics much more art than science, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible for the local chief executive to rid himself of the political leadership role upon which his very future depends.

In a second category, there are functions where some degree of delegation seems reasonable. Legislative leadership at the local level is partly political, partly professional. In the latter aspect it seems feasible for the executive to obtain assistance from well qualified, well informed department heads and staff personnel. Thus the burden can be shared, and quite possibly, criticism occasionally blunted. In the lobbying portion of his role it may well be that the chief executive will be able to share his burdens—not only with staff and technical assistants, but with citizen committees. The latter, if properly selected, may also respond to staff guidance.

Finally there are the administrative functions where technically trained, professionally competent staff can greatly ease the chief executive's burden and at the same time provide a higher level of performance. A chief administrator, whether he be known as deputy mayor, chief administrative officer, administrative manager or simply aide to the mayor, can assume the day-to-day tasks of departmental supervision. In the fiscal arena, a trained budget officer can handle many of the hearing preparation and execution chores without limiting the ultimate decision powers of the chief

executive. A capable personnel officer can provide not only the increasing expertise demanded by contract negotiations, under the Taylor Law, but can also lift from the mayor's shoulders much of the political pressure exerted by patronage demands from the party faithful. With the increasing complexity of preparing "specs", seeking bids, and making contract awards, the chief executive can also benefit from the services of a trained purchasing officer. In the field of planning, a staff assistant with the breadth of vision and, above all, the time to think may prevent immediate blunders and open up long range vistas. The abysmal state of many New York state cities, villages and towns--not only in the physical, but also in the socio-economic sense—reflects the fact that few chief executives have been afforded the luxury of sufficient relief from daily minutiae to think through the broad problems of their communities.

It seems possible to identify in advance the kinds of qualities necessary in staffing the chief executive's office. Professional competence is a sine qua non. Heaven help the mayor who still thinks in 19th Century terms of nepotism or spoils in filling such key posts. But there is also the task of finding experts willing to accept the chief executive's leadership, content to influence his policy decisions rather than making the decisions for him. These assistants must, in the words of the late Louis Brownlow, possess a "passion for anonymity". They must be willing to serve selflessly rather than amass political power for the next primary election. Above all, those who serve the local executive in staff capacity must accept the harsh conditions of their employment—restrictive pay scales, public criticism (their inevitable lot as they seek to shield their principal) and the certain hostility of the bureaucracy around them (for they are the "boss's men").

Where does a local chief executive find such paragons? Many a mayor discovers neither funds nor bodies available. He himself is his own staff—in whole or in part, capably or ineffectively. The more fortunate chief executive may find that the present public service orientation of many young people offers an outstanding (if possibly brief) opportunity to attract staff. College and university students have in recent years, increasingly turned their career notions from business to public service (with the strong accent on service). Many of them find in the assignment of highly responsible tasks, the opportunity direct "political" involvement and challenges that replace, or at least supplement, more traditional material rewards. There is, to this observer, a need for local chief executives to rid themselves of much mythology about the gap between "town and gown" and the "radicalism" of youth and to adopt imaginative programs, such as summer internships, to attract more of this talent to local community service.

The ultimate reward for such an approach cannot be guaranteed. There is always the danger of "backlash" against institutions, and even chief executives, that seem "outmoded". But there is also the greater possibility of an institutionalized payoff—a payoff in better services, in increased professionalism and in imaginative approaches. In short, the possibility of impressive contribution to a good government that inevitably becomes good politics, a not unimportant matter from the standpoint of the elective local chief executive.

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

by

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When trying to bring about change in organizational climate, we often concentrate on trying to change the individuals who work within that climate. This is probably not the most effective way to create a better climate because one must first change organizational roles before the behavior of individuals can be changed. Individuals operate within the context of an organizational role and, as such, their behavior is not likely to change unless expectations about their roles are changed.

The terms "organizational climate" and "motivation" are often used together. To this point, motivation of individuals is unlikely to take place in a way that is most desirable unless organizational climate makes it possible for people to be motivated. To disassociate organizational climate from motivation is unrealistic for this reason. In viewing organizational climate, it might be best for us to look at some of the components or organizational climate rather than simply viewing it in more abstract terms. The advantage of looking at the components of organizational climate is that managers can respond to these components as opposed to the difficulties of responding to a request to "improve organizational climate" or "motivate your people". Some of the components of organizational climate are perceptions of responsibility, conformity, organizational clarity, standards of performance, recognition and support, and others which we'll talk about shortly. We'll also see how these components can be measured and changed by a manager. Then we'll apply what we have talked about in an exercise where two of you will take on roles and the rest of us will see what kind of a climate exists and how this climate might be changed. If we have time, we'll look at some of your problems with regard to organizational climate to see how these might be changed.

HOW TO SUPERVISE PEOPLE

by

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An administrator (mayor, executive, manager, etc.) is one who a) directs or influences the activities of other persons and b) undertakes the responsibility for achieving certain end results, tasks or goals through these efforts.

Bob Katz of Harvard Business School says there are three basic skills necessary for success:

1) Technical skill - the knowledge and proficiency in specific kinds of activity usually involving methods, processes, procedures or technique - musician, engineer, accountant.

2) Human skill - the ability to work with people - aware of own attitudes, assumptions and beliefs about individuals and groups. Behave in such a way that it encourages people to produce the desired result.

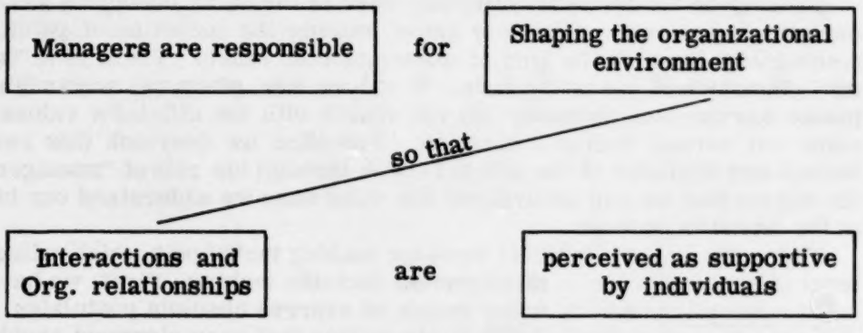
3) Conceptual skill - ability to see the whole organization - how the various functions depend on one another, the community, political and social economic forces at work. Decisions which are made to help the organization move toward a desired goal.

Pieter Bruyn of the Netherlands - identifies administrative and managerial authority in terms of five types or bases:

1) Reward power or influence - ability to reward
2) Coercive power or influence - the ability to administer punishment
3) Legitimate power or influence - the right
4) Expert power or influence - authority of knowledge
5) Referent power or influence - indication of loyalty

Rensis Likert, in his New Pattern of Management, believes that the style of leadership in decision making is important and that democratic participative or consultative or supportive management will:

1) Increase the understanding of the problems and alternatives being considered.
2) Give the individual a better understanding of the other person's point of view.
3) Increase the cohesiveness between employees and the organization.
4) Instill a sense of responsibility for the success of the decision.
5) Develop a broader overall organizational point of view.



Some Key Elements of Good Supervision
(Management, Administration)

1) Determining objectives, goals and results to achieve.
2) Establishing policies a) which reflect broad understanding of human values, b) realistic balance of priorities, c) expecting high standards of performance.
3) Formulating plans, programs and realistic schedule for accomplishments.
4) Determining the total work necessary and organizing and dividing it so each person is responsible and accountable for his share. (Men, money and machines.)

5) Staffing the positions determined as needed with capable people who have the knowledge and skills and desire to work.
6) Paying what is right within the ability of the organization to pay compared with other like positions in the community.
7) Communicating to all concerned - upwards and downwards.
8) Measuring results and adjusting plans and schedules to readjust the
9) Exercising judgment and making reasonable decisions after review of alternates available in time to anticipate crisis.
10) Appraising performance and rewarding success and eliminating those not able to carry their share.

DECISION-MAKING AND PLANNING

by

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The fateful process of making decisions and projecting them into the future has long plagued managers in all levels and types of organizations. The public official, in particular, must make decisions in an atmosphere of the "public". His decisions effect the lives and property of the citizens. As such, different levels of public scrutiny do (and are perceived to) be reflected in his consideration of policy.

Underlying the decisions officials make is the value managers assign to certain phenomenon. The very act of valuing the inclusion of public accountability dictates the kind of decisions they reach. There is a "trade-off" phenomenon operating here. If values like planning, accountability, public service and "honesty" do not match with the official's values they come out second best in a decision. Too often we overlook this reality. Values and attitudes of the official speak through his role of "manager", to the degree that we can understand our value base we understand our biases in the decision process.

There are several types of decision making techniques which reflect the level of sophistication in management decision making. First, we have the naive conception used by many people to express absolute postulates. For example, the official who holds to the values that unemployment should not be allowed to exceed 5% of the labor force is chaining himself to a hierarchy of values that is absolute and unyielding. If some other value comes up to contend with this one what happens? What we see is that a mere articulation of a hierarchy of values does not tell us what procedure to follow when they shift in importance. In some instances a 5% level of unemployment might be good.

The next type of technique is the rational-deductive ideal. This one suggests that the decision maker follows a prescribed deductive logic, that the ultimate decision is a function of good logic. Yet the technique obviates consideration of social and cultural variables upon which the logic operates. An extension of this model is found in the synoptic model. It assumes that the decision maker is a rational man (the economic assumption) and can

stipulate outcomes, values, and utility functions prior to undertaking the process of deciding. He must be exhaustive and complete in his analysis, a feat few men can achieve in this world of people dominated situations.

The type of decision-making techniques which may offer more potential than either extreme is the strategy of disjointed incrementalism. It takes situations as it finds them and attempts to conservatively change and analyze as the problem changes. In doing so it allows for intuition and values inherent in the culture, social interaction and personality. This recognition of the humaneness of man and the interrelated nature of political events reflects a more accurate picture of reality. Yet, it too has its limitations. Too often it strikes to the symptom of a problem rather than to the problem itself. As a process it values action over inclusion of many variables, hence, it can be manipulated by those who champion intuitive procedures over the beneficial discipline of the synoptic technique.

Applying the notion of decision-making to planning we see how the value for planning per se conditions the type of plans we construct. Some decision makers inevitably assume that past history is a sound basis for future projections. This logic assumes that the past, more than less, repeats itself in the future. We see this in the projected figures of agencies and departments. A five per cent raise in something assumes that what we are increasing from is a sound base. Hence, we confuse the problem with the means to solve it.

In summary, we see that man is an inefficient manipulator of information. As such, he too often makes decisions without adequate information. He may not value information over the degree of trouble involved in getting it. Yet, a good decision (and plan) is a function of "good" data. And by good data we mean relevant and timely information. How a manager decides information to be relevant is again a function of his perception as colored by his values. This notion of perception is important here because our perceptions color the way we see the world (and is fundamental to the understanding of decision making). Without a constant upgrading of our logic we cannot change our perceptions, hence, we do not accept change. In replenishing our reservoir of information on decision making we should be mindful of the cultural, social, personality, bureaucratic and organizational implications of our decision rules. The incremental technique allows us to see this and adapt to a dynamic reality.

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APPLICATIONS OF NEW MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by

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Before one can expound on the Application of New Management Techniques to Local Government, there has to be an understanding of the meaning of Application and Technique. Webster's Dictionary defines application as "putting into practice theory"; technique is defined as "the method or the details of procedure essential to expertness of execution in any art, science, etc." These two words are exemplified well by the former coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi. His theory was winning by practicing the fundamentals of football (blocking, tackling, etc.) until there was expertness in execution. The record of the Packers under coach Lombardi speaks for the success of application and technique.

This leads to the point of understanding New Management techniques which could become a semantic dilemma. In other words, old concepts assume new terminology. For example, Planning, Programming and Budgeting are being analyzed around the country by local government. Although the application of such a system is new, at least in terminology, local government has been using in part, if not in total, the same concept. The main problem has been developing new and fresh ideas to implement effective, efficient, and economical applications and techniques. If one uses a computer to compile information for management purposes, the application could be a new management technique but not necessarily effective, efficient, and economical. The old adage that "the system is only as good as the people using it", applies to this discourse.

Now, by keeping in mind what has just been related, some applications of new management techniques for local government, problems and hopefully, solutions can be related.

Over twenty-five years ago, the Rand Corporation developed the Delphi System or "brain trust", which basically "picks the brains" of knowledgeable individuals in their professional field. This system attempts to analyze future problems and predict when they will be resolved. Many corporations have used this system to plan their future production and organizational goals. Although the time and effort of such an application may be costly in the beginning, the overall projections of local government problems may be met head on if leading public and private officials developed such a system.

In all areas of local government, the problem of attracting, developing and maintaining personnel is a constant problem. The greatest problem is recruiting amidst local competition. In order to overcome this problem, each level of local government should maintain a system of recruiting by developing an intern program that would retain trained governmental employees. This could be accomplished, as in professional newsletters, by notifying each level of local government on the status of vacant positions and employees looking for new jobs.

As the Federal and State governments have cabinet meetings, Onondaga County government ventured with an Interdepartmental Committee whose

members consisted mainly of service agency heads. The main purpose was to maintain and develop internal procedures as well as resolve pressing problems affecting the County Executive and his Department heads. This committee was time consuming but the important factor was communication.

Finally, but not least, the use of electronic computer, microfilm and other modern office equipment is becoming a vital part in local government. With such equipment, instant information for management purposes becomes a reality, but the expense can be tremendous in terms of towns and villages investing in such equipment. On the other hand, if a centralized metropolitan data processing, microfilm or any other equipment center can be developed on a contractual or shared basis, local government at all levels would reduce the problem of inefficiency, ineffectiveness and uneconomical systems.

In conclusion, an analogy of the human body might be helpful in relating the application of new management techniques for local government. If management was a doctor and designed a body, including the heart and lungs, there is a beginning; if limbs are added, there is motivation; and if the head with brains is completed, there is direction and communication. Thus, if there is an agreed upon beginning point with the motivation or need defined, then the direction or goal or management information system can be attained.

THE FUTURE OF OUR URBAN AREAS

THE FUTURE HAS CHANGED

by

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Someone once said, "The trouble with our times is that the future isn't like it used to be." This joke suggests a profound insight. The future isn't like it used to be because man's anticipations of the future have changed. We don't expect the future to be the same as the present or the past. For many, the future has become dimmed and uncertain. We are troubled about many of our current social and technological trends. We are fearful of the power man can exert upon himself and his environment and because man's current decisions will significantly affect the structures of society and the quality of life for many generations to come.

Thus, our concern for the future intensifies and we search for holds on the future by which we can pick our way through the maze of choices and decisions that confront us. Already it is clear that we must develop a new respect for the future and a new consciousness that sees our past and present as incubators for our future.

What is the future? The future is an idea existing in the human mind. We can have knowledge of the past or present, but we cannot have knowledge or objective certainty about the future. If we could have knowledge of the future then we could act in the present so as to change the future and therefore invalidate this knowledge. The future exists in the human mind in the form of hopes, fears, anticipations and plans. As Bertrand de Jouvenel suggests we all project a personal future onto a kind of social map of the

present. We assume this social map of the present is somewhat stable. For example, we assume that banks and stores and police and fire protection will serve our needs, and that we will be reasonably successful in predicting other people's behaviors. But in an age of accelerated change we are uncertain about the stability of our social map of the present. Therefore, we must turn to the future.

Why study the future? In the past change occurred very slowly. Institutions were held sacred and change was considered a corruption. Custom and tradition were the recipes which regulated social behavior. Foreseeability was guaranteed because the future was not likely to be very different from the past or present. Thus, the knowledge a man possessed in the present has a high likelihood of being valid in the future. Today this has all changed. We invest heavily in our growth industries, attempt to control our environment, and seek to institutionalize the very process of change and diffusion of change. Thus, we are in the process of moving into a post-industrial society which as Herman Kahn and Anthony Wiener suggest is likely to be characterized by

1. Per capita income about 50 times pre-industrial societies.
2. Most "economic" activities are tertiary and quaternary, i.e., service oriented.
3. Business firms no longer the major source of innovation.
4. Effective floor on income and welfare.
5. Market plays diminished role compared to public sector and "social accounts".
6. Widespread cybernation.
7. The learning society.

If we see these characteristics in the context of population growth, urbanization and growth of megalopolises, increasing capability for mass destruction and an increasing tempo of change, it is clear that ad hoc decision making has become inadequate. The commitments we make today have implications running deeply into a future that will be less and less like the present. Therefore, we must begin to anticipate problems in time to deal with impending social crises. Without forecasting there is no freedom of choice, and to make better choices we must learn to make better conjectures about the future. And our forecasting must extend more deeply into the future because we may be least able to change the socio-political situations closest to us.

How study the future? Researchers trying to study the future today take an approach radically different from pre-modern man.

1. They begin by assuming social events can't be predicted because social events are dependent on human will and judgment which can't be rigorously predicted in advance. A forecast, however, is more useful. A forecast is a future state of affairs which is imaginative and realistic and could plausibly grow out of the present. We can make many forecasts, both desirable and undesirable, but alternative futures, with the hope that one of these forecasts will approximately describe the future as it actually occurs. If man intervenes to increase the likelihood a particular future will occur then he is inventing the future.

2. Society is viewed as a matrix of complex social forces. Policies or decisions made at one point frequently radiate out and produce many changes, both intended and unintended, elsewhere. Thus, studying the future means systematically assessing the consequences of current policy choices to understand better their future implications.

3. Studying the future requires experts from a wide cross-section of disciplines to probe, debate and develop integrated forecasts on the consequences of alternative policies.

4. A strong emphasis is placed on methodology. Many new forecasting and planning techniques are being developed to generate alternative future pictures of society and to better understand how these alternative futures, both desirable and undesirable, might occur.

Perhaps all futurists are able to do is increase the chances of society for "planned muddling through." Perhaps we also increase the likelihood that man can develop the social inventions needed to keep the future open until we can understand better modern man in an advanced technological society.

Organizational Long Range Planning. Every manager is a futurist. Whether he realizes it or not he makes certain assumptions about the future and these assumptions lead to certain organizational behaviors and results. How should a manager and his organization view long range planning to bring about more effective results?

The purpose of long range planning (say 2-10 years in the future) is to create organizational responsiveness and adaptability to changing social/technological conditions. To summarize E. Kirby Warren's excellent treatment of this subject, planning is the process of preparing for the commitment of resources, faster, less disruptively and in the most economical fashion. It is the process, the mechanism for planning, and not the plan that is of the greatest importance. The function of long range planning is the development of processes, attitudes and perspectives which make planning possible; it is the basis for sensing needs, developing reappraisals and making decisions to influence or adapt to changing social conditions. Good long range planning should provide:

1. a clearer understanding of likely future impacts on present decisions.
2. increased ability to anticipate areas requiring future decisions.
3. increased speed of relevant information flow.
4. increased ability for faster and less disruptive implementation of future decisions.

Despite the apparent simplicity of these ideas, there are very few organizations today which do effective long range planning. Some of the obstacles to long range planning are:

1. belief crash programs can make up for mistakes.
2. pressures for present gains or visibility.
3. insecurity about the use of long range planning techniques.
4. failure to make alternative estimates of the future.
5. planners do not expect to see the results of their long range planning efforts.
6. management doesn't differentially respond to good and bad long range planning.
7. planners are placed in organizational positions which engender conflict and withholding of information.

Conclusion

The future has changed because our expectations of the future have changed. The important question facing all of us now is what has the future changed to, or better yet, what do we want to change the future to?

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